
**Natural Resources, Ecology &
Parks Committee**

ESSB 5699

Brief Description: Preventing and controlling aquatic invasive species and algae.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senators Oke, Jacobsen, Spanel, Doumit, Kline, Rockefeller and Rasmussen).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Increases additional vessel registration fees by \$3 and deposits these moneys in three new dedicated accounts for aquatic invasive species prevention and enforcement, and freshwater aquatic algae control.
- Directs the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Washington State Patrol to inspect watercraft and trailers and implement an aquatic invasive species early detection and rapid response plan.

Hearing Date: 3/22/05

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

Aquatic nuisance species, such as zebra mussels, European green crab, Chinese mitten crab, spartina, and hydrilla, can threaten the ecological integrity of Washington's marine and freshwater resources. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has authority to manage aquatic nuisance species and is charged with tracking and proposing solutions to manage these species.

The 2000 Washington Legislature created the Aquatic Nuisance Species Committee (Committee) and charged it with fostering state, federal, tribal, and private cooperation on aquatic nuisance species issues. Legislation in 2002 directed the WDFW to create a rapid response plan in cooperation with the Aquatic Nuisance Species Committee and other state agencies involved in invasive species management. The Director of the WDFW and the Chief of the Washington State Patrol were directed to develop a plan to inspect watercraft entering the state to prevent the introduction of invasive aquatic species.

Certain recreational vessels are required to obtain a vessel registration from the Department of Licensing for a \$10.50 annual fee. In addition to the registration fee, an additional \$2 is collected annually and deposited in the derelict vessel removal account.

A boat trailer is subject to a \$30 annual vehicle license fee. In addition to the license fee, there is a \$3 additional charge that is directed to the Freshwater Aquatic Weeds Account. Funds in the Freshwater Aquatic Weeds Account may be appropriated to the Department of Ecology, with two-thirds of the funds to be issued as grants to local governments and tribes to prevent, remove, or manage freshwater aquatic weeds.

Summary of Bill:

Vessel registration fees are increased \$3, increasing the annual total vessel registration and additional fees from \$12.50 to \$15.50. Of the additional \$3 fee, \$1.50 is deposited in the newly created Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Account, \$1 is deposited in the newly created Freshwater Aquatic Algae Control Account, and 50 cents is deposited in the Aquatic Invasive Species Enforcement Account. The fee increase expires June 30, 2012.

The Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Account may be appropriated to the WDFW to develop an Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program for recreational watercraft. Funds from the account must be expended as follows:

1. To inspect watercraft, watercraft trailers, and outboard motors at selected boat launching sites;
2. To educate general law enforcement officers on how to enforce state laws relating to preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species;
3. To evaluate and survey the risk posed by marine recreational watercraft in spreading aquatic invasive species into Washington waters;
4. To evaluate the risk posed by float planes in spreading aquatic invasive species into Washington waters; and
5. To implement an aquatic invasive species early detection and rapid response plan.

The WDFW must provide training to Washington State Patrol (WSP) employees working at port of entry weigh stations on how to inspect recreational watercraft for the presence of zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species. The WDFW must also work cooperatively with the WSP to set up random check stations to inspect watercraft at areas of high boating activity.

The Freshwater Aquatic Algae Control Account may be appropriated to the WDFW to develop a Freshwater Aquatic Algae Control Program. Moneys may be used for grants to cities, counties, tribes, special purpose districts, and state agencies to manage excessive freshwater algae. Moneys may also be used to provide technical assistance to applicants and the public aquatic algae control.

The Aquatic Invasive Species Enforcement Account may be appropriated to the WSP to develop an Aquatic Invasive Species Enforcement Program for recreational watercraft. Funds from the account must be expended to inspect recreational watercraft that are required to stop at port of entry weigh stations managed by the WSP. The watercraft must be inspected for the presence of zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species. In addition, funds may be used to establish random check stations, in conjunction with the WDFW, to inspect watercraft in areas of high boating activity.

The WDFW and the WSP shall submit a biennial report to the appropriate legislative committees by December 1, 2007, describing the actions taken along with suggestions for improvements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.